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# TEACHING THE INTRODUCTORY COURSE IN ECONOMICS

## SUMMARY

The American ideal in education: training for citizenship in a democracy, 88. — Importance of economics to this end, 90. — The borrowed German ideal, leading to research and lectures, has done harm, 91. — The teacher the central figure, 93. — Multitude of recent aids to teaching economics, 96. — Outlines, selections, materials, 97. — Questions and Problems, 100. — The serviceableness of these devices likely to be overestimated, 102. — Effectiveness in teaching, not research, should be the main aim of the college, 105.

THE recent appearance of numerous source books and students' manuals<sup>1</sup> for use in connection with the fundamental course in economics makes a fit occasion for discussing the question of its proper content and direction. It is well that this should be so. Because of the interest and discussion thus aroused significant gain may fairly be expected both in methods of teaching and in the emphasis placed on the teacher's function by univer-

<sup>1</sup> I have examined the following: Bullock, C. J., *Selected Readings in Economics*, Boston, 1907; Taylor, F. M., *Some Readings in Economics*, Ann Arbor, 1907; Fetter, F. A., *Source Book in Economics*, selected and edited for the use of college classes, New York, 1913; Marshall, L. C., Wright, C. W., and Field, J. A., *Materials for the Study of Elementary Economics*, Chicago, 1913; Hamilton, W. H., *Current Economic Problems*, a series of readings in the control of industrial development, Chicago, 1915; Sumner, W. G., *Problems in Political Economy*, New York, 1884; Davenport, H. J., *Exercises in Value Theory based upon "Value and Distribution,"* Chicago, 1908; Taylor, F. M., *Principles of Economics*, Ann Arbor, 1913; *Papers Presented at the Second Conference on the Teaching of Economics*, Chicago, 1911; Marshall, Wright, and Field, *Outlines of Economics Developed in a Series of Problems*, Chicago, 1910; Fisher, Irving, *Suggested Problems for Teachers for use with Elementary Principles of Economics*, New York, 1912; Putnam, George E., *Practice Problems in Economics for the use of Elementary Students*, University of Kansas, 1915; Day, E. E., and Davis, J. S., *Questions on the Principles of Economics*, New York, 1915; Urdahl, Thomas K., *Elementary Economics Manual*, consisting of definitions, quiz questions, problems and summaries of economic theories, Madison, 1915; Hayes, H. G., *Problems and Exercises in Economics*, revised edition, New York, 1916; Wildman, M. S., *Syllabus* (No title page).

sity authorities. What follows is concerned solely with undergraduate teaching. It is written from the viewpoint of the college rather than the university; and its underlying philosophy is that of the American ideal in education.

Our early colleges and universities were founded on English models. Around our older universities still lingers something of the English attitude that collegiate training is fit training for the leisured life of the gentleman. It is a liberalizing training acquired without undue stress or strain and unbiased by consideration of its utilitarian bearing. Later we added to our ideals another drawn from German sources. It is based on quite another conception of the function of the university and the proper outcome of its curriculum and training. Not the gentleman, primarily, but the scholar is the product planned for. Not a leisurely life adorned by scholarship pursued for its own sake, but laborious days of scientific research, crowded with the severest mental exertion and resulting in monuments of productive scholarship. American students newly returned<sup>1</sup> from German Universities in the nineteenth century earnestly presented this ideal to their students and colleagues as the true guiding star in education.

Here is no quarrel with either ideal *per se*. Each has served its nation well; and it might be possible that in the future either, or both, would serve us well in American education. But that either is a correct guiding principle by which to plan and judge the training given

<sup>1</sup> Speaking of German university influence, of two hundred and twenty-five American students at German universities between 1815 and 1850, one hundred and thirty-seven went into college teaching. This gave an impetus to the elective system. "Lectures were substituted for recitations. Some of these were dry enough, but, being the German method, were received as the latest thing in education. Research became a word of great significance. There was to be a certain productivity of scholarship, *which more than teaching was the test of fitness to hold a collegiate chair*. Monographs and books were the outward and visible signs of this inward and scholarly accomplishment." Sharpless, *The American College*, pp. 40-41. The italics are mine.

to American undergraduates today one may fairly disbelieve; that neither is a correct criterion by which to measure the results achieved by any teacher charged with the important duty of introducing American sophomores in the flesh to the subject of economics should be clear after slight reflection.

The American ideal of education found clear expression in our early institutions; it finds freest expression today in our western state universities. One may grant that it needs clear and authoritative statement; that it is followed because American conditions rigidly enforce it perhaps as frequently as because it is clearly apprehended and consciously followed. But it rules, nevertheless. Other and borrowed ideals may disturb the surface but cannot deflect the deep flowing stream of American education. It rules because it is the fit accompaniment of our ideals of democracy; because it has grown with the growth of that democracy; and because it meets the immediate needs and desires of that democracy today. This ruling ideal demands that the American undergraduate be so trained that he is prepared to fulfil all the obligations and duties that fall to his share as a member of a democracy. This means that he is prepared for leadership, in the double sense of capacity to lead and willingness to undertake the responsibilities of that position — citizenship in the largest meaning of the term. A small minority may become scholars by profession, and for them the graduate school may furnish professional training. With the leisured life of the professional gentlemen our youthful democracy has little to do and — the temptation is strong to add — cares less. That ideal befits a mature nation that has conquered its wildernesses, both natural and social; has ordered its institutions; established its philosophy and set metes and bounds to its aspirations.

It does not accord with our lusty youthfulness as a nation. It is not with such aspirations that the youth of America throng our colleges, and for neither the English nor the German ideal of scholarship is support found in the basic conditions existing in American homes and social groups. Quite as surely as the homes and social group from which the English undergraduate is drawn give full support to the English ideal in education do the American home and society generally give support to the American ideal for the college, *i. e.*, training for citizenship in a democracy. Proof of such a spirit is written large in recent American university history. Let any charge of seeming truth be raised that conditions in a given college are subversive of true democracy; that there is undue support of rank and privilege; that there is failure to instill initiative and clear-sighted criticism; or that there is lack of faith in democratic institutions — and the public voice insistently and unerringly declares its disapproval and brooks no excuses or delay in correcting that situation. Other appeals may fall unheeded on the public ear but no one doubts in America that education is the foundation of democracy and that those who are privileged to train democracy's sons and daughters are by that token training first and foremost for citizenship and leadership. Success in this mission brings the American college and professor ready and generous applause; failure or indifference costs both college and professor their positions in public esteem.

Let it be granted, then, at the outset that the college is to be judged by this American ideal and that the teaching of our subject is to be accounted successful in the measure that it contributes to this result; that teachers are worthy and methods are desirable as they meet this test and that the American college graduate is

well trained only as and when he is ready to fulfil all his obligations as a citizen of a democracy. What is demanded of him? And what may the study of economics contribute to the meeting of that demand?

Now if the fundamental course in economics be part of a system of training for citizenship rather than for scholarship — and in the case of 95 per cent of our boys and girls this will be its actual function — it should be clear that it has a large mission to perform in that training. The citizen needs both to know and to understand the facts and theories with which our science is concerned. He needs, even more perhaps, a mind alert, vigorous, critical, disciplined and practised in handling economic questions. Many, one might almost say most, public questions today have an economic bearing. Many are distinctly economic. Practically all of them demand the same capacity for sustained reasoning and clear analysis as do economic problems. To train effective thinkers is to train effective citizens.<sup>1</sup> And such training, when properly presented, our science is preëminently fitted to give. It has special advantages as a mental discipline. It is effective and thought-provoking beyond most subjects; it takes hold of current problems and discussions and so of the student's interest and it deals with the very stuff with which our students deal later as citizens. Following this American ideal we restrict in a measure our endeavors in dealing with the undergraduate. We aim not at learning for its own sake; the history of our theories is not of essential importance to the future citizen; we do not present a subject; we do not inculcate a set of doctrines; we are not concerned with instilling a mass of facts. These may be worthy ends but they are not the first need of

<sup>1</sup> "At least twelve college presidents have said to me in the last year that in their judgment the chief advantage of a college course is learning to think." C. S. Cooper, *Why Go to College?*, p. 152.

citizens. We would create the disciplined mind, capable of and practised in economic reasoning; we teach students, not a mass of facts; we train minds rather than develop a subject; and we are interested in citizens as a product rather than in scholars.

In the college thus devoted to the training of the citizens and in the presentation of our subject as a first course, the central factor is the teacher. Texts, manuals and collections of materials may aid his work; they are in no sense or degree a substitute for him. They do not lessen the need for teachers of superior merit; instead they intensify that need. None but the well-poised, broad-minded man, gifted with the true teacher's insight, and knowing the American student with the same precision of knowledge and intimacy of everyday acquaintance that the student of inheritance expends on his guinea pigs, will be able to relegate the machinery to its proper place of subordination to the result. Teachers and paraphernalia exist only as aids to the student. Both are useful only as they stir him to self-activity. Each may be anathema if they interfere with, discourage, or deaden his mental activity.

It is here that the damaging effect of the borrowed German ideal of education becomes potently manifest in our American colleges. The teacher has been subordinated to the scholar;<sup>1</sup> the needs of the students to the

<sup>1</sup> Compare the positive statements of a well-informed and friendly English critic — speaking of Harvard generally: "Most of the professors care first of all for the advancement of science and scholarship; they prefer lectures to large audiences to the catechetical instruction of multiplied, 'sections' . . . and, to be perfectly frank, they are not much interested in the ordinary undergraduate." Referring to the young instructor: "Let him remember that his promotion will depend largely upon his showing the ability to do independent work; let him take care not to be so absorbed in the duties of his temporary position as to fail to produce some little bit of scholarly or scientific achievement for himself." W. J. Ashley, *Surveys*, pp. 458-460.

And an English critic of another school: "The Professor is too often over-specialized and incapable of forming an intelligent, modest idea of his place in education. . . . He stands between his students and books, he says in lectures in his own way what had far better be left for other men's books to tell, he teaches his beliefs without a court of

demands of productive scholarship; and the true test of the teacher's success, his ability to stir students to effective thinking, has been lost sight of in the earnest search of the universities for the capable scholar. Here is no quarrel with the professional scholar, no failure to understand the function of the university as a place of research, no belittling of the output of American scholarship. Here is only an attempt to differentiate between the graduate school as a professional school, training scholars, and the college as an American institution, training citizens; between the scholar's function of research and authorship and the teacher's work of developing student minds. One spends his best energies and abilities in the search for truth; the other in the education of ingenuous youth. And it is submitted that the time has come for a clear division of labor between these two groups. It is believed that nowhere in society will the advantages of this principle be more clearly manifest and largely fruitful. No man can serve these two masters, for either he will neglect his students and spend himself freely on book production or he will give his best efforts to his students and fail of preferment. For the universities bid high for the scholar whose abilities are manifest in his published works, and have scant facilities for learning of the teacher whose merits are known only to his students, and to them ten or twenty years later.

Yet it should be evident that ability to carry through research is no earnest of ability to teach students. The qualities demanded are diverse, almost conflicting. One spends thought on materials in libraries, museums or laboratories; the other exercises his ingenuity and

appeal." "Our universities and colleges are still but imperfectly aware of the recent invention of the Printed Book and its intelligent use in this stage of education has made little or no headway against their venerable traditions." H. G. Wells, *Mankind in the Making*, p. 299.



imagination in acquiring full information of the state of mind, toward his subject of some scores of undergraduates. The scholar pursues truth; the teacher aids in the development of immature minds. One deals with natural phenomena; the other with human nature. The scholar may be a helpless scientific manager before this hard fact of undergraduate human nature or he may prove as inept at teaching as an artist at painting if he had full knowledge of the theory and history of art and had not yet put brush to canvas. It may be doubted whether one filled with a great zeal to enlarge the bounds of human knowledge will be equally burning with desire to enlarge the content of the undergraduate mind, or inject structure and discipline into its void.<sup>1</sup> Equally men truly called to teach may feel it a hardship when faced with a demand to justify their calling with substantial scholarly productions while fulfilling also the full demand of an American college for classroom work and in conscience bound to do their full duty by their students. Both time and energy must fail in the face of the double demand.<sup>2</sup>

It cannot be too much and too often insisted that the central figure in the educational structure in America is the college teacher. These men set the requirements which secondary schools meet. They fix standards to which the undergraduates measure up. They determine

<sup>1</sup> "The American college teacher has too often been chosen simply because of his scholarship."

"The young professor is scholarly and expert in his knowledge of his subject but utterly without ability to impart it with interest. He lacks driving force as well as guiding and regulating force. He seems at times without the capacity for real feeling." C. S. Cooper, *Why Go to College?*, pp. 74-75.

<sup>2</sup> "More often the thinker has lived by teaching, and modern University organization is deliberately aimed at creating such a relation between teacher and student as shall both stimulate the teacher and train the student. In the moral sciences this arrangement is the main source of modern Thought. But it is not wholly successful. There are hundreds of cases in which a professor's teaching spoils his thinking, and these are balanced by hundreds of others in which his thinking spoils his teaching." Wallas, *The Great Society*, pp. 186-187.

the caliber of men sent on to professional and graduate schools. The college teacher's methods are reflected in secondary schools, for they train the teachers. And they give final bent and direction to the vast majority of our liberally trained men and women. The spirit instilled by the college instructor and the discipline and ability to think clearly which his efforts produce will be certainly evidenced in public discussion and in secondary instruction. But the teacher's function will not be adequately performed unless its importance is adequately estimated and rewarded by the universities. When the American colleges search out and compete for sheer teaching ability; when the test of a college teacher's fitness and preferment rests on no other basis than his ability to teach students; when the teacher is freed from other demands than such as pertain to his better preparation for teaching, then and then only, naturally, may we expect to get the better results we crave. There is no lack of good ability nor yet of devotion to this splendid service. But the change in emphasis needed cannot be achieved by isolated men, however capable or devoted. Nor yet can it be brought about by the sternest effort of an isolated institution. Intercollegiate competition sets standards near those of the least admirable in education as surely as similar business competition holds down standards in the industrial realms. We look to the great universities of America for leadership in this change of emphasis from the German to the American ideal; from the demand for the scholar to search for the teacher; from subordination of the teacher's functions to the demands of productive scholarship. Theirs is the proud position of leadership, and to them fall the duties involved in that position. They can give us this new division of labor. If they dignify and enlarge the work of the teacher, *as a teacher*,

others will follow. If these undergraduate teachers are called on to conduct courses of instruction framed after careful consideration of the needs of students fitting for life as citizens of our democracy, that model will rule in American education.

Granting that this change in emphasis may be secured; that college teachers will be hired to teach; that they will be retained and advanced with as much regularity and liberality when they fill this demand as are their scholarly associates of the graduate school when they produce a worthy book; that their entire stock of energy and all their ability are to be devoted to the solution of the problems of teaching students; that they realize that the true test of good teaching is found in the degree of advancement achieved by their students — granting all this, we may anticipate momentous gains in the wit and wisdom with which our subject, among others, is presented. It is again a matter of emphasis rather than anything startlingly new. Good models, worthy the closest scrutiny of the teacher of economics, are found in the laboratory methods of the scientists, and in the case system of the law schools. In these diverse subjects, different methods and appliances are used but all agree in the essential idea that the best teaching, and the only good teaching, is that which stirs the student mind to activity, which induces thought and demands as its test of success proof of capacity for independent judgment, self-directed initiative, and critical analysis. We learn to think only by thinking.<sup>1</sup> The student cannot benefit by the vicarious study and thought of his scholarly instructor. He may gain

<sup>1</sup> “ Unless the students are actively engaged not simply in taking in what they are told, but in rearranging it, turning it over, trying and testing it, they are doing little good. We recognize this quite abundantly in the laboratory nowadays, but we neglect it enormously in the more theoretical study of a subject. . . . Ideas of a subject must be handled in discussion, reproduction and dispute.” Wells, *Mankind in the Making*, p. 305.

largely if the same volume of thought is expended in study of the class of which he makes one. This is the teacher's field of investigation renewed with each new class. There is no substitute for the mind to mind work of the teacher. If he does not find the undergraduate mind as fascinating as the evolution of the nervous system he is probably better material for a scholar than for a teacher. If he cannot arouse the same enthusiasm over methods of awakening that mind that he feels over newly invented methods of investigation he should shun collegiate teaching; and if the evidence of solid advance in thought ability manifest in the examination books of his class does not bring the same glow and warmth as the sight of his own latest book he should seek his rightful place in graduate school research.

It is in this spirit that we welcome the stream of books proffered as aids to the teaching of elementary economics in American colleges. They represent the spirit of revolt against the present situation. They supplant the lecture with teaching. It should be obvious that the lecture in these days of easy and cheap book printing has no necessary place in the teaching of economics. It consumes valuable class-room time — time when minds should be actively engaged — in the thought-deadening business of receiving and recording another's thoughts,<sup>1</sup> which might better first be read from a printed page and discussed later in the class-room. The supreme business of our course is to get as much effective thinking done in the year as possible. Right economy of time demands the retirement of the lecture. Consideration of its

<sup>1</sup> Cf. a classic description of the lecture method in actual practice. "They do not listen, however attentive and orderly they may be. The bell rings, and a troop of tired-looking boys, followed perhaps by a larger number of meek-eyed girls, file into the class room, sit down, remove the expressions from their faces, open their note-books on the broad chair arms and receive. It is about as inspiring an audience as a room full of phonographs holding up their brass trumpets." E. E. Slosson, *Great American Universities*, p. 520.

effect on the student's business of thinking actively enforces the demand.<sup>1</sup>

Agreement with this point of view disposes at once of some of the aids which the new books proffer. Mere outlines of lectures — notes made to save the student's ink — are valueless. Of similar sort are the elaborate endeavors to simplify the study of economics through the use of diagrams and illustrations. It is not thus that one thinks effectively of things economic. It is not so denatured that our student is to find economic problems later as a citizen. Our function is not to painlessly and surreptitiously make lodgment of our doctrines in the student mind. It rather behooves us to stir him to high endeavor and give continual exercise to his mental muscle; to send him out finally well exercised in economic thinking and confident of his ability to perform well in that field.

From another angle we reject attempts in various guises to give aid by arousing interest. Selections and questions which have no other basis than this have no

<sup>1</sup> One may add the indictment of the lecture method at Oxford in 1878 from Jowett's note-book:

“ The present teaching at Oxford is,

1. Utterly bad for the students.
2. Mere reading to the students.

But on the other hand,

1. It is flattering to the teacher.
2. It enables him to pursue his studies.”

The opinion of Johnson at a much earlier date: “ People have nowadays got strange opinion that everything should be taught by lectures. Now, I cannot see that lectures can do so much good as reading the books from which the lectures are taken. I know nothing that may be taught by lectures except where experiments are shown. . . . Lectures were once useful, but now, when all can read, and books are so numerous, lectures are unnecessary. If your attention fails and you miss a part of the lecture it is lost; you cannot go back as you do upon a book.” *Globe edition of Boswell's Life*, pp. 174, 561.

That of a well-informed critic recently published: “ The lecture system has many advantages. But if introduced too early in the course of education it is in peril of substituting general facts and general knowledge for close study, and it is also in danger of training the memory at the expense of the logical faculties. Furthermore, this peril is enhanced when students attend so many lectures that they have little time left for reading, and less time for reflection.” *Fleming, Universities of the World*, p. 268.

claim on the teacher's consideration. They divert attention from the business in hand. Time is wasted when time is precious. The student is not prepared to differentiate the sham from the real. And, beyond all this, the subject needs no such adornment. This is mistaking the entertaining for the interesting. It signifies lack of insight into the basis of interest. Interest grows in any worthy subject through hard work and conscious achievement. It enlarges in direct proportion to the growth of knowledge and knowledge is won through severe study. We should demand and enforce, then, plentiful mental exercise, reject all adventitious aid, relying for interest on the growing understanding of the students. Interest in heredity may induce a student to care painstakingly for a colony of mice, weigh their food, measure and regulate their indulgence in alcohol, count, weigh and observe the development of their progeny. All this he does with meticulous care if he understands his subject, and counts it a fascinating task. Wonderful is the interest in baseball statistics displayed by the capable fan. Will not similar mastery of economics bring like interest without these adventitious aids ? <sup>1</sup>

Based on a different conception are the various collections of materials and selections. The undergraduate, we are told, lacks a factual basis for economic thinking. The sophomore boy or girl has not sufficient knowledge of industrial conditions to enable him to apprehend the theories propounded. Much of this undoubtedly is true. The teacher may have moments

<sup>1</sup> "Of the assertion that it is expedient to arouse an appetite for both the facts and the theory, at least this much may be said by way of discussion: that spectacular teaching, the teaching generously interlarded with thrills and anecdotes and sentiments, is poor teaching; that a sustained interest is best maintained by inducing the student to do plenty of intelligent and hard work and by the daily stimulus which the live teacher knows how to impart; but that despite these truths it is justifiable and expedient to study carefully how the interest of the student may be aroused and maintained." T. S. Adams, at the 1911 Chicago Conference.

when it is revealed to him that more facts would make his conceptions clearer, his insight surer. Even the scholar may win to wisdom at the end of the road and realize that only infinite knowledge would prove an adequate basis for his ambitious, heaven-aspiring theories. But this is not for the undergraduate. His business is to begin economic thinking, not end it. Our duty is to start him on that road, not admire his triumphant finish. We get a sophomore to teach; a sophomore produced under American conditions, where home and social group must often fail as supports to our teaching. We teach students drawn democratically from the body politic. We cannot expect this group to assimilate readily and classify accurately the valuable selections garnered in our scholarly excursions. There are limits to the most capable sophomore's digestive ability. And mental indigestion in the teaching of elementary economics is a serious malady. Given a good text, a willing student and a gifted teacher who understands the individual sophomore, aid can be found in the use of selections assigned because the need is evident and the student has been led to feel it. Reading to satisfy interest and reading to cover assignments are vastly dissimilar in results. A few supplementary references, of clear-cut character and considerable length which fill gaps in information well apprehended by student and teacher, are undoubtedly essential. But only a scholar can appreciate the monumental mass of selections at hand and the elementary course is too burdened with essential tasks to make their large use practical.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The following statements are from the preface of a recently published collection — Hamilton's Current Economic Problems. "The readings which follow have been selected from the most miscellaneous sources. They represent all the prominent attitudes, from the most conservative to the most radical, which condition the direction of our development. They are written by men possessed of the widest variety of opinion — economic, political and sociological. They represent emotionally as well as intellectu-

Of similar character is the suggestion carried in our aids that the student may be expected in his first approach to the subject to compare various theories and even systems of economics. Six theories of wages in an elementary economics manual may make any teacher pause. Suggested readings including such widely dissimilar theorists as Patten, Fetter, Clark, Taussig, Adams, Smith, Marshall, Hobson, may well arouse wonder. That any sophomore could make intelligent use of them passes belief. That a practical teacher with abundant every-day contact with American sophomores and with wisdom in appraising the results of his teaching would long continue such methods seems incredible. Ours is a more prosaic and simpler task. For critical examinations of theories and texts, old and new, of systems of economics established and proposed, our work may be a preparation; but our students must learn to stand and walk in the economic field before we demand that they avoid pitfalls and dangers that tax the expert abilities of the tried warriors of economic controversy. These suggestions are discouragements rather than aids to both student and teacher. We recognize here a recrudescence of the German ideal of learning — a denial of the American ideal of training for sound citizenship. This overshoots the mark of the undergraduate teacher's task of developing immature economic minds. We do not aim at completeness of knowledge primarily but rather at effective ability to grapple with economic questions. Hence we reject such suggested aids.

The solid achievements of the new literature would seem to be the suggested questions and problems whose

ually. . . . They contain sound argument, good judgment, truth. They contain, too, much of overstatement, fallacious reasoning and falsehood. . . ."

This collection is designed for use as the "principal pedagogical instrument" in a semester course in current problems or in connection with a text in general theory. In both cases problems and exercises serve "as supplementary material."



purpose is to stimulate and direct the student's thinking. Given an adequate text and teacher, comprehension enough to be content with *one*, nothing can be better than questions which test the student's apprehension of the text; exercises which require his alert application of theories to concrete situations; problems which test his ability to analyze situations and discern the bearing of various social forces and factors. This is closely akin to the demand made on the citizen. It is hence a preliminary exercise fitted to develop ability to meet that demand. The more concrete, practical and up-to-date these exercises can be made, the better. They must be varied and constantly changed. The student must understand that he is not solving problems but apprehending theories; not memorizing answers to questions but testing the caliber of his understanding of economic principles. One hastens to add that the number of such exercises used should be strictly limited and nicely adjusted to the needs of the class in hand; ideally, indeed, adjusted to the individual student. Much of the matter contained in the more extended manuals represents an attempt to put the teacher between covers, an attempt foredoomed to failure. This will be evident to anyone who attempts to use these formulated questions with a class of students. Many are unnecessary and wasteful of precious time, for every class represents diverse capacities and is possessed of vastly different stores of information. Others miss fire altogether, for the class cannot be expected to be armed at all points and universally alert. Still others require a degree of explanation and preparation before they are made effective that makes their use unduly laborious.

For all such machinery the essential substitute is an adequate text and a teacher of insight. He must know his class as he knows his text and subject — accurately,

precisely, and at every stage of their advancement. He must be as apt in class-room methods as a scholar in laboratory technic; he must understand the stage of development of each class — if possible each student — as accurately as the investigator does the stage of advancement of his problems. This is his work — a job to tax his wisdom and knowledge. There is none more difficult and fascinating, as there is none more worth while.<sup>1</sup> Such a teacher will not be at a loss for questions and exercises to stimulate student thinking in the unexplored corners of the subject in hand. Such a teacher will speedily relegate extended books of problems and questions to his reference shelves and invent and adapt daily in his mind to mind teaching the most effective exercises. There will be some exercises repeated year after year in every class. But even here the problems set must be varied. Such variation provides an attractive up-to-dateness. But of much more importance is the effect it has in breaking up the notion that the solution of a given problem is the end sought. The instruction must inculcate the notion that principles are being developed and the student's grasp of them tested. How important this may be, practised and earnest teachers of American sophomores will understand.

This discussion, then, leads to the conclusion that the genuine aid derived by the teacher in class-room work from the new helps in teaching elementary economics will be slight. The benefit derived by the American sophomore intent on mastering that subject will not be great. The best feature of the proffered aid is the exer-

<sup>1</sup> Compare Jowett's obituary of his friend Luke, a tutor: "He understood perfectly the secret of success as a College Tutor. The secret is chiefly devotion to the work and consideration for the characters of young men. No young man is really hostile to one who is laboring, evening as well as morning, wholly for his good — who troubles him only about weightier matters — who knows how to sympathize with his better mind — who can venture to associate with him without formality or restraint." *Life and Letters of Jowett*, vol. i, p. 332.

cise and problems material. Every progressive teacher will find helpful suggestions here. Yet every such teacher will find that it needs adaptation to the present need of each class that he teaches. It is agreed that the manuals are most useful in the institutions of their origin and in the hands of their authors, and the reason is that *there* they best meet the students' needs. For the student as he stands in economics is the central — one is tempted to say the unknown — factor in the equation. We welcome the manifestations of interest in the teaching problem. We repudiate the suggestion that that problem can be solved by the production of scholarly books. We would exorcise the productive scholarship ideal here and replace it with that of developmental teaching. We want the research instinct applied to the undergraduate mind. We want freedom and appreciation for the teacher in his own person and for the exercise of his own function.

That such change of emphasis will yield great returns there is abundant evidence. Let any capable economist examine his own progress in the subject. It is certain that his ability and grasp grew through his own and not through his instructor's mental activity. It is equally plain that this points the direction of his efforts as a teacher. Economists are familiar with the pertinent example found in J. S. Mill's description of his severe training at the hands of his father. We are inclined to sympathize with the son on remembering the heroic character of the father's demand for effective thinking. But that teacher developed one of the most capable economists in the subject's history.<sup>1</sup> Many of us will

<sup>1</sup> One may fruitfully consider Mill's own judgment in this connection. "It is, no doubt, a very laudable effort, in modern teaching to render as much as possible of what the young are required to learn, easy and interesting to them. But when this principle is pushed to the length of not requiring them to learn anything *but* what has been made easy and interesting, one of the chief objects of education has been sacrificed." *Autobiography*, p. 52.

have read of the self-directed efforts of Carl Schurz in mastering the language of his adopted country. More will know of his perfect mastery of English. That students respond and results are adequate to compensate the energy expended is proven by association with students in laboratory courses; with men studying law under the case system, or by consideration of the methods and results evidenced in the Wellesley German department.<sup>1</sup> Always the interest is vigorous and active, the result is sure and gratifying, *if* capable teachers adapt teaching methods to the end of stirring the student minds to activity, willingly spending laborious days in apprehending the content and needs of that mind, and holding the student to a standard of real effort and advancement.

For we note that teaching efforts and manuals alike fail if there is no rigid maintenance of a high standard. The elder Mill knew no quality of mercy here. We may not measure up to his severity in dealing with American students. We recognize the facts in our problem. The American college deals with students drawn from American homes and secondary schools. In state universities, in particular, we owe a duty to each student who appears. We may anticipate a ready reaction on secondary school requirements if the universities set the pace. But in America generally we must as American teachers face the American situation. This is to suggest that our students will come to us from various homes and social groups. They will not come in many instances in our new society from cultured homes. Back

<sup>1</sup> "The drastic thoroughness with which unpromising students are weeded out of the courses in German enhances rather than defeats their popularity among undergraduates." Florence Converse, *Story of Wellesley*, p. 142.

Professor Müller: "Now *joy*, genuine joy, in their work, based on good, strong, mental exercise, is what we want and what on the whole we get from our students. It was so in the days of Fräulein Wenkebach and is so now, I am happy to say—and not in the literature courses only, but in our elementary drill work as well." *Ibid.*, p. 141.

of them is no history of educational achievement in the family record. Around their youth was thrown no spell of books and quiet thoughtfulness. Sons and daughters of pioneers and immigrants meet the college teachers in America. They are splendid in ambition, capable in intellect, responsive and loyal, not slothful in spirit, and resilient in mind. But the teacher of insight knows that pioneer America cannot expect for many generations to send the colleges men and women of great home-acquired culture. The teacher must measure growth and achievement rather than the absolute result. He must understand his student as he enters his class; appreciate his endeavor and advancement in the subject; and accept the result if a normal amount of real mental growth is shown. Thus the college has fitted for better life as a citizen. Thus the teacher has worthily fulfilled his mission. Thus the student has economically spent the valuable years devoted to his college course. To effectively aid in this mental growth and understandingly measure it is the teacher's function. It suggests again his central position in the American college.

If one apprehends the American college student in his peculiar and worthy character, the next question in view is that of the American collegiate situation. Here, as was suggested above, we meet the question of inter-collegiate competition. This enforces the conclusion that reforms must originate above. The leaders in education must give us the lead in the new emphasis needed on teaching and teachers. Similar in effect is the interdepartment competition within the college. No department or teacher can in fairness and in practice exact a higher standard of performance or result than the others in the college, or indeed, than the general educational level of that section of the country. This means that the teacher or department cannot be

judged harshly if he fails of the high standard of the elder Mill. As he has differently prepared material so he has hampering surrounding conditions. The standards he sets, if they be attainable through hard work, will be met, and cheerfully met. The larger demand brings compensating larger interest based on conscious growth and mastery in the subject. But the practical problem in America today is to get the standard of acceptable performance in our subject of economics materially advanced. And the concluding suggestion of this paper is that we look for light and leading to the great universities. Let them but set the example, demonstrate the result, through right teaching train teachers imbued with the teacher's interest, *i. e.*, interest in training students, and all else will follow in due course. Their established position renders them immune to the handicaps of competition closely besetting the usual American college and the usual economics department. Their recognized position of leadership places the obligation squarely upon them, and only their assumption of the duty promises the beneficial modification of the present situation. The college teacher cannot make a demand for results higher than that established in his college; the college cannot demand severer study than the going rate in the district. But the university in its position of leadership backed by its acquired prestige is not so limited in setting standards and demanding their fulfilment. The democracy needs disciplined minds; the colleges must therefore enforce this discipline. In doing so they will serve the state, benefit the student, lighten the teacher's work and astonish themselves with the gain in class-room interest and in the enjoyment of the subject by the students. Then the teacher will win back his rich domain abdicated for a season through the lure of productive

scholarship. He cannot be forced from his kingdom by any assault of student activities or failure of student support. His powers are plenary. Let him but exercise them. Let the universities but hold up his hands.

This then is our argument. The correct American ideal in the undergraduate course in economics is training for citizenship in the largest meaning of that term; in that training the teacher is the fundamental factor; the college must search for, reward, and support the teacher, making a new division of labor between teachers and scholars, and expecting from the undergraduate teacher the expenditure of his abilities freely on the teacher's function. Given such an emphasis on teaching the proffered helps will find their proper subordinate and limited sphere, the lecture will be abandoned, the attempt to over-crowd the course will be given over. We will settle down to the business of training to think in economic realms, to developing such sophomore minds as American conditions send. To do this efficiently we must uphold a higher standard of results and exact a severer discipline. To effect this change in emphasis and secure this elevation of standards we look hopefully to the leading universities. Theirs is the ability, the opportunity, and the duty.

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